

**Big Cypress National Preserve  
ORV Advisory Committee Meeting  
December 1, 2009  
Big Cypress National Preserve  
Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center  
Ochopee, Florida  
3:30 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance.** Committee members: Present – Manley Fuller, Robin Barnes, John Adornato, Win Everham, Wayne Jenkins, Franklin Adams, Karl Greer, David Denham, Chuck Hampton, Barbara Jean Powell, Marsha Connell, Laurie Macdonald, Curt Witthoff. Not present – Ed Woods

Preserve staff present: Pedro Ramos, J.D. Lee, Ed Clark, Ron Clark, Dennis Bartalino, Damon Doumlele, Don Hargrove, David Hamm, Susan Rossi, Delia Clark (contracted facilitator).

Approximately 16 members of the public were in attendance.

**Welcome.** Superintendent Pedro Ramos welcomed members of the ORVAC and the public. He pointed out the significance of this meeting taking place in the new Welcome Center and noted that it has been a long six months since the ORVAC met back in May. He had received the new charter and announced that members whose terms had expired volunteered to serve on the ORVAC for an additional three years and were reinstated. He gave an overview of Preserve (BICY) activities since the last meeting:

1. BICY staff engaged in public meetings for the Addition General Management Plan (GMP) held in Everglades City, Miami, Naples, and Broward County.
2. Over 17,000 comments were received from the public on the GMP, and he hopes to complete the plan by late summer or early fall.
3. Volunteers are returning, and BICY will be fully staffed once again in preparation for the visitation season.

Delia Clark discussed public protocol and reminded the public that this is an ORVAC meeting and that the public will be welcome to make comments at designated times as follows:

- 5:00 Turner River, Corn Dance, and trail marking and signage
- 6:20 Secondary trails
- 7:25 North access from Monroe Station, followed by general comments

**Approval of Minutes.**

- Win Everham was not in attendance at the May meeting.

- Barbara Jean Powell did not see a reference to the discussion that she had at the end of the meeting on the subject of looping trails.
- Minutes must be consistent with name titles.
- **Decision:** No name titles will be written into minutes.
- Page 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: Karl Greer was not identified as a subcommittee member.

The minutes were approved as corrected.

**Superintendent's Report.** Pedro Ramos gave the following update:

- The old charter expired in June, and delays in the new charter were due to the new administration and new personnel that slowed the transition process.
- BICY received the new charter approximately one month ago, signed by DOI Secretary Salazar and good for two years.
- Secretary Salazar will be at the Tamiami trail groundbreaking ceremony, which marks his second visit to south Florida.
- Manley Fuller's, Karl Greer's, and Chuck Hampton's terms expired in June. Each had accepted appointments to serve an additional three-year term.
- In June 2010, five members' terms will expire, and Pedro will ask them about their interest in serving an additional term.
- He has received objections from the public on John Adornato's and Laurie Macdonald's participation on the committee. Some had questioned the appropriateness of either of them serving on the committee when their prospective organizations are engaged in litigation with the NPS. Pedro stated that none of the ORVAC members have demonstrated an unwillingness to work to their full ability to implement the Preserve's ORV management plan. He noted the balance provided by members who may have opposing points of view and the importance of committee diversity on the issue of ORV use in the Preserve.
- Each person who serves on the ORVAC was selected by the Secretary of the Interior for his or her ability to sit down and effectively work with others.
- Pedro affirmed that he listens very carefully to public comments and concerns, and he thanked the committee and the public for listening.
- Laurie Macdonald reassured the public that she takes her job seriously and that she recognizes that ORVs are a legitimate use in the Preserve. She feels that everyone on the committee is working well together.
- John Adornato said that he respects the opinions of others and understands that there are some differences between the Addition and the original Preserve. He felt that he adds diversity to the committee.
- Barbara Jean Powell asked Pedro to consider adding a high-level FWC representative to the committee. Pedro stated that BICY and FWC are working closely on topics that are of mutual interest to them.
- Barbara Jean pointed out differences she has seen in the new charter compared to the last, such as 18 members compared the 14 in the old charter. She noted that in the past the agency appointed the committee. Pedro recalled that in a past meeting there was discussion about adding new members to the committee. He felt that the group is

working well together and he wanted to foster these relationships. He spoke of the possible selection of a Chair and the possible future addition of new members to the ORVAC.

- A committee member asked if the delay experienced over the past six months should result in starting the charter renewal process sooner. Pedro replied that this was possible and asked the committee to send in their comments to let him know what is on their mind.

### **Turner River/Corn Dance Units Trail Designation, Marking, and Signage.**

Bob DeGross gave the following update on recent and future NPS actions:

- Bob reviewed the methodology in the Turner River trail designation process:
  1. Public submitted trail route requests for the Turner River Unit.
  2. NPS forwarded requests to an ORVAC subcommittee for review and critique.
  3. NPS ground-truthed ORVAC's recommendations for suitability and sustainability. *Suitability* means that the trail would be located on the proper soil substrate and meets other criteria identified in the ORV plan. *Sustainability* means that a trail is located in an area that will not require frequent trail stabilization and little foreseeable future maintenance.
  4. Reconnaissance took place last winter, and NPS has come up with a conceptual trail network that included those recommended by the ORVAC.
- The winter dry season enabled staff to look at places that were recommended by the committee.
- NPS is seeking ORVAC guidance and advice on the issue of secondary trails.
- Preserve staff took the ORVAC recommendations, began trail marking, and are coming up with a final trail network for the superintendent's approval.
- In summary, the NPS received the ORVAC's recommendations, this dry season will continue the reconnaissance of the secondary trail system, and has begun marking the primary trails in the Turner River Unit.

### ***Discussion.***

- Barbara Jean Powell asked if any of the requested trail routes had been rejected at the field level. Bob responded that all of the primary trails have been looked at, and a couple of secondary trails have been rejected due to unstable substrate.
- Bob explained that the NPS will provide the ORVAC with a map of the original conceptual trail network that was for the Turner River Unit as it was outlined in the ORV plan, the primary trails recommendation that the committee submitted to NPS, and a third map showing the new primary trail network in the Turner River Unit. These maps collectively will show what trails were rejected. He explained that very few trails were rejected. There was a suggestion to re-route the northern end of the Concho Billie trail where it goes in from Turner River Road, but the NPS determined

that there was no access across the canal and decided to keep the entrance at its existing point.

- Damon Doumlele said that when the NPS asked for input on trails that the public would like to see developed, the locations of several trails were not clear on the maps, and the NPS could either not find the trail, or if one was found nearby, NPS was not sure that it was the trail the requester had in mind.
- Barbara Jean asked if there will be another opportunity to follow-up with trail requests, and Damon said yes, to his knowledge.
- Damon noted that the NPS learned an important lesson from this exercise, and the process will be repeated for the Corn Dance Unit with the exception that future requested trail routes must be submitted by GPS tracks to insure correct trail selection.
- Franklin Adams recommended placing names of landmarks on maps to assist in quick identification of specific areas. He stated that the secondary trail issue is unresolved and asked Pedro if once a secondary trail network is in place, will it be codified the same as the primary trails. Pedro responded affirmatively.
- Franklin asked if adaptive management can be applied when necessary to move a trail that is not working properly. Chief Ranger Ed Clark said yes, but it is a laborious and time-intensive process.
- Bob DeGross commented that once the trails are in place, the NPS will have field notes and other information that will explain why a particular trail was not selected and that the trail rejection information will be available upon request.
- Barbara Jean Powell asked if a trail is not suitable, will the ORVAC have an opportunity to make recommendations for changes for secondary trails. Bob said he cannot answer at this time because NPS has not done enough reconnaissance of secondary trails. But if NPS field work shows this to be a common issue, then this would be a topic that NPS would definitely like to discuss further.
- John Adornato asked if the marked trails have the final signs. Bob replied that the NPS has the draft document that the ORVAC subcommittee is reviewing and providing comments on, and at the moment, NPS is utilizing that document as a guide. If a trail needs to be shifted, NPS will shift it.
- John asked if NPS had made a final determination of any improvements that need to be made before moving forward. Bob responded that a lot of what was done when NPS did field reconnaissance is re-routing the trails to cross terrain that requires the least amount of stabilization possible. NPS emphasis and goal is to reduce the need for future spot treatments as often as possible.
- John asked if NPS has done any new trail stabilization and if the NPS had a feel for how much fill material will be needed. Bob said not at this time. NPS does have field notes, but the volume of fill material needed for trail stabilization purposes has not been calculated.
- John asked if the NPS is using reconnaissance or notes to determine boundaries, because he had noticed that some of the trails went into the gray areas that were identified as non-motorized use areas in the ORV plan. Bob replied that NPS has not used field reconnaissance to define boundaries.
- Pedro Ramos said that the closed area boundaries are natural boundaries dependent on soil and vegetation types. He does not believe that NPS will move towards

marking those areas or blocking them off but rather designating a trail system that does not go into those areas. He would like to codify the trail system so that in essence, ORVs can only be used on the trails.

- Karl Greer expressed his interest in the primary trail system that will be treated next. He is interested in knowing NPS stabilization plan for the Buckskin Trail and the old sand trail that goes to Poppenhager's. Bob replied that during one of the last in-house meetings when discussing the Turner River Unit, NPS did set a priority list for areas that need stabilization and better marking, and trails identified by Karl were one of the NPS top priorities.
- Chief of Facilities Management Dennis Bartalino added that the next work that will be completed are trails located in the Lost Dog area.
- Karl mentioned that he has seen an increase in trail markings and asked if there have been any trail name changes. Bob said he thinks we should finalize the trail system in the Turner River Unit and then go back and correct trail names.
- Barbara Jean Powell observed that current maps appear to depict prairies larger than they are and that there is a need for more accurate maps to make trail alignment correct. She recommended that prairies be ground-truthed for suitability in support of the trail system. Laurie Macdonald agreed and added that the ORVAC has been asking for more accurate maps that are sorely needed.
- Win Everham revived the trail location issue previously discussed and read from page 33 of the ORV plan to address the issue.
- Chuck Hampton reminded NPS staff that the private property owners had asked the NPS to contact landowners on the issue of secondary trails near private property. Pedro replied that the secondary trails concept should be addressed at the ORVAC level.
- Barbara Jean Powell asked if there was a timeline given to complete the Turner River Unit, and Pedro responded that he would like to have a designated trail system in place by the middle of 2010. He is hoping to have the trail marking in the Corn Dance Unit completed by the end of next year.
- Bob DeGross said that the ORV plan recommended approximately 60 miles of primary trails in the Corn Dance Unit and asked the public and ORVAC to take GPS track logs and waypoints of their recommended trail routes to accommodate NPS ground-truthing. He recommended that whenever ORV users use trails that they would like to remain open, they should create a track log for that purpose.
- Bob mentioned that NPS hopes to have a public meeting in February related to the Corn Dance Unit, where NPS will ask participants to bring in their track log information. The data will be reviewed by the ORVAC subcommittee and full committee before submission of the recommended trail network.
- A committee member asked for the availability of maps, and Damon Doumlele stated that maps are available for review on the PEPC website.
- Damon pointed out that the Corn Dance Unit is smaller than Turner River, and that should expedite the trail designation process.
- Barbara Jean Powell reported that the subcommittee had a conference call meeting in which some of the members were not in attendance; she said that those who were in attendance did not recommend use of lots of signage.

- Bob DeGross recommended that the subcommittee review the document and respond to the ORVAC in writing.
- Pedro added that the success of the ORV plan is highly dependent on how well we can keep people on the designated trails. He encouraged the ORVAC to think outside the box to bring new ideas forward for consideration to keep people on trails. He said that BICY staff have had similar discussions, and he is very interested in hearing ideas brought forward by the ORVAC.
- Bob encouraged the ORVAC to think as if they were first-time users of the Preserve to find methods to keep visitors on the trails.
- Win Everham suggested that the committee take Barbara Jean Powell's draft document and modify the information to meet the subcommittee's needs.
- Delia Clark asked the committee if they concur with what is being given the secondary trails subcommittee as a charge, and they were in agreement.
- Members of the Education and Public Use Subcommittee are Barbara Jean Powell, Karl Greer, Curt Witthoff, Win Everham, and John Adornato.

### ***Public Comment.***

Lyle McCandless – Informed the ORVAC and members of the public that he sent an e-mail message out this morning to the superintendent. He was told in the past that the public will have an opportunity to add more trails to what has been identified. He is concerned that there would not be other opportunities to add new trails to the trail network.

Frank Denninger – Encouraged the ORVAC to look for room for modification of trails if necessary. He hopes that the ORVAC will work hard to come up with a trail system that everyone can live with. After the trail has been codified, there will be few opportunities for changes. He does not believe that there will be future opportunity for adaptive management.

Bill Clark – There are few primary trails and fewer secondary trails. He requested NPS to locate trails closer to Turner River Road. He asked the ORVAC to revisit access and recommended that the Peckel Bridge Trail be revisited. He will walk the trail that he is referencing and will submit the track log to Damon Doumlele.

Matthew Schwartz – Referenced the BICY ORV plan maps that show areas that are colored gray to depict Preserve habitat considered too sensitive for ORV use and stated that the gray areas need to be identified. BICY management should conduct studies of the surface substrate first, and the job of the ORVAC and administration is to make sure buggies stay on suitable trails.

### **Secondary Trails.**

In an effort to assist the committee in making difficult decisions, Delia Clark introduced a decision-making matrix to the ORVAC. She described what she called a consensus meter that should be applied when voting on difficult topics as follows:

1. Consensus – Yes!!!
2. Consent – I can live with it! Won't block
3. Not yet – I need more information, specifically, xxx
4. Stuck – I am opposed! Go to majority/minority report

Concerning secondary trails, she noted the following:

- NPS' job is to develop a good trail system based on functionality and content.
- BICY staff is open to the definition of secondary trails.
- BICY staff is looking for help from the ORVAC.

Delia led the discussion and described four additional areas that need further input:

Discussion Area	Concerns
Loops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*open flood gates to everyone</li> <li>*become heavily used, require stabilization</li> <li>*require backing, turning - equates to more damage</li> <li>*save hours of driving, gas</li> </ul>
Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*used as a way to expand primary system</li> <li>*½ mile – 3 miles – not clear, may lead to trails everywhere</li> <li>*relationship to number of miles of primary trails</li> <li>*long enough – functional?</li> </ul>
Destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*hunting is everywhere, so why designate as destination?</li> <li>*how to choose between one person's and another's</li> <li>*ensure access to camping, etc.</li> </ul>
Use of camp trails as recreation trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*camp trails are not equal to private driveways</li> <li>*inclusion as secondary trails will increase use</li> </ul>

Delia noted that there seemed to be agreement among the committee that camping areas should be on high ground, spot treatments only should be used for stabilizing trails, and an interest in linking destinations together.

Laurie Macdonald said that the subcommittee had a long discussion that was not resolved. She drew a "Y" and posed a situation in which a destination was located in the center of the Y. She described the desire for some to have a trail that joins both branches of the Y and felt that it would be inappropriate to use this reasoning repeatedly. It would be acceptable to occasionally make such a connected trail.

### ***Discussion.***

- John Adornato strongly favored the recommended approach that Delia Clark introduced to the ORVAC to help resolve tough decisions and asked how Preserve management will address tough issues.
- Barbara Jean Powell explained that loops reduce stress on equipment and time traveling. She said that there is already a secondary trail system. She asked that the

ORVAC keep in mind the trail system that existed in the past that was equivalent to approximately 30,000 miles of trails; what is being proposed is approximately 100 miles of trails. She stated that the ORV community is looking for sustainable, representative trails.

- Karl Greer said that it will take some work to get sustainable secondary trails identified.
- Win Everham said that the idea about loops sounded like the committee was working toward a consensus that loops are not always bad.
- Barbara Jean Powell recommended maintaining flexibility.
- Loops can quickly turn into primary trails.
- Laurie Macdonald - Loops should be considered on a site-specific basis and may be acceptable at certain locations.
- Franklin Adams - Knows many places where three trails lead to the same location. Functionality and a trail system that would work is what the ORVAC should be looking at.
- Pedro Ramos asked if anyone knew of more than two or three instances in the Turner River Unit that looping is an issue. There was no response.
- John Adornato - The idea is to determine the destination and function of the route. A primary route is a way to get through the Preserve and not to a destination.
- Wayne Jenkins appreciated the consensus decision meter presented by Delia Clark. The definitions in the ORV plan are sufficient, and he reflected on past conversations where the subcommittee was not able to reach a solution. Today's discussions helped the committee past those indecisions.

### ***Public Comment.***

Frank Denninger – Enjoyed listening to new discussions that addressed the issue of loop trails. He explained the importance of wind direction to hunters in reaching a specific destination. He spoke of camp trails that were discussed during the May meeting and thought that the public could recreate on camp trails up to a specific point.

Matthew Schwartz – Addressed the discussion on process of secondary trails and asked the questions as to what is a destination and what is the definition of a secondary trail. If the ORVAC would answer these questions, then the question of loops and how long they should be and all of the auxiliary questions would fall into place. The ORVAC's overall objective is to reduce the spatial expanse of the ORV trail network in concert with the ORV plan. The plan provides a conceptual map of where the ORV trails should be. A map in the plan clearly shows areas that no longer authorize the use of ORVs, which is the purpose of the plan. Any trail that is used frequently will become a primary trail.

Charles Barley – Asked the committee to remember Joe Browder's expert eyewitness account on why we have the Preserve. He quoted Joe's remarks when he said, "The Preserve was made, bought, and politicked for the men and their machines to pursue traditional recreation." The trail system already exists, and the ORV community does not want to cut the number of trails. The trail system should remain as is. The ORVAC should not be afraid to recommend allowing the trails to remain as they are. He reiterated

the discussion that Joe Browder had with the ORVAC and asked the committee to please not forget his words.

Lyle McCandless – The Superintendent attended Big Cypress Swamp Sportsmen’s Alliance board meeting in July, where Lyle brought forward a document that was the settlement agreement between the NPS and the Florida Biodiversity Project dated October 25, 1995. The document stated that the NPS would implement a system of secondary trails and/or use areas. This definition means that there could be all secondary trails, a combination of secondary trails and use areas, or all use areas. He had asked Pedro to please use this as an opportunity to help the ORV community and not to call him tomorrow and explain these facts away. Pedro called him the next day and said the language that Lyle referenced did not make it in the final document. Obviously, the language did not make it because it would have been an advantage for the ORV community. The ORV community will not allow that to go away. The committee should take this point into their consideration. The Secretary of the Interior put the ORVAC together without a clear definition of secondary trails, and the ORVAC is now struggling with the secondary trail definition. More secondary trails should be designated, and anyone who supports Alternative F identified in the Addition Lands GMP, which designates large areas as wilderness, should not be allowed to serve on the committee, when they are absolutely against ORVs. He asked the committee to ask Pedro what are the chances of them getting one additional mile of trail after the 110 miles are accepted. Lyle guaranteed that there will be no additional mileage provided for motorized recreational use.

### ***Discussion.***

- Franklin Adams – Good people with good intentions means less frustration. He hopes that the ORVAC can do a reasonable job; all will not be happy with their decisions. Good people with good intentions can bring this thing to a close.
- John Adornato – Is camping of any kind allowed at the terminus of secondary trails? Pedro Ramos said yes.
- Barbara Jean Powell –The ORVAC should have some type of agreement that the site-specific destination should be accessed through the use of tools that would provide flexibility. The decision for site-specific solutions would be used to critique each loop trail and secondary trail. Functionality and not mileage is the driver.
- Laurie Macdonald – Concerned about the cumulative secondary trail length in an area approaching the cumulative length of primary trails.
- Barbara Jean Powell – Respectfully suggested that there should not be an arbitrary number about anything, especially some ratio between primary and secondary trails. She asked the committee to keep this idea in perspective with what they are trying to accomplish as well as Joe Browder’s presentation. As long as the ORVAC is greatly reducing the “spaghetti” map, the intent of the ORV plan will be fulfilled.

- John Adornato – Supported the use of numbers because it is a means of providing an overall measure.
- Delia Clark sensed from the group that they do not want arbitrary numbers.
- Franklin Adams – What they are trying to do here is to create reasonable access for what many view in the most severe way the over-impacts of the former use of the area. They may be trying to make up in the secondary trail system for what we lost in the primary trail system, but he is not very comfortable with the cumulative impact method or numbers. The committee needs to come up with something that everyone can live with.
- Robin Barnes asked why there is so much discussion on mileage. If a secondary trail leads to a destination it does not matter how long it is. If someone is going from point A to point B, it does not matter how long the trail is; after all, you can't stop a trail in the middle of a destination.
- Delia Clark – What we are gathering from this conversation is what can be agreed on as a destination in terms of definitions. What all can agree on so far is that there are special locations that can be considered multi-use special locations. For every location the committee should be able to answer the question of why a site was selected as a location that also meets environmental qualifiers.
- Barbara Jean Powell – Agreed that destinations are made for a number of reasons. Hunting is a legitimate reason for a destination. Hunting is the primary reason for going from point A to point B and is 80% of what this is all about.
- Delia Clark reminded the group that they were bumping into problems by identifying a site as only for hunting and recommended that the site be identified for multipurpose uses to facilitate the committee moving forward with these issues. This would not preclude hunting as a primary reason for a destination, but it would be included in the definition.
- Karl Greer did not want to downplay the significance of hunting as a desired use for any particular site and did not want to lose the ability to go to any particular site for the sole purpose of hunting.
- Delia Clark said that if the group would accept a multiple-use area as a destination, it would help the group to move forward.
- Wayne Jenkins – Has been critical of other people saying that hunting is not a destination but now realizes that unless you are a hunter, you don't understand what you do to hunt. One can use scouting as an example. Hunters look for tracks and other sign that tells them that a location is a likely place to find game. To get to that pre-selected location is to go to a destination to hunt. Some may feel that hunters walk out in the woods and shoot something, but it doesn't work like that.
- John Adornato – Cannot understand how destinations will be accessed and selected over others. How do we distinguish one destination over another?
- Barbara Jean Powell - Had not heard any challenges to destinations identified for camping, photography, bird watching, meditating, religious purposes, or other activities. But there are people on the committee and in the public that would challenge whether hunting is a valid destination. There should be affirmation on the record that hunting is a valid destination.

- John Adornato – If each of the “spaghetti map” trails led to a hunting destination, what direction does the ORVAC use to advise NPS staff in the selection of one destination over another?
- Manley Fuller was mystified by the discussion and recommended a logical way to get to John Adornato’s question is to see some commonality to proposed destinations and place those locations on a map for review. You do not have to agree to a fixed figure, but you can be aware of how many trail miles there are. The propensity to use the primary trails would be higher than would be the case for the secondary trails. His suggestion: Figure out special locations, place them on a map, and work on them.
- Laurie Macdonald – Remembered the discussion on hunting access and believes that there should be access points that should not have motorized access. Management calls for open areas in the ORV plan.
- Franklin Adams – It is good to get people out to places where buggies have not been for years. Undesignated wilderness would best describe them. There is a functional trail system in existence, and the trail system itself will dictate area use.
- Laurie Macdonald – Because every inch of the Preserve is open to hunting, some criteria are needed; how do you choose one destination over another?
- Barbara Jean Powell – Spoke of old-timers who made recommendations based not only on their own preferences of special places, but also what they knew were popular places to go to. It comes down to a matter of trust, mentioned before, and locals should be trusted to come up with a reasonable access plan.
- Franklin Adams asked how the ORVAC can achieve their objectives under Laurie Macdonald’s scenario.
- Delia asked if there were any other questions that need to be asked from Preserve staff. Pedro Ramos was pleased with the progress that has been made tonight.
- Pedro is looking forward to the committee doing a little more work and getting to the bottom of specific issues that they are dealing with.
- Delia asked the ORVAC to get with Franklin, Barbara Jean, and David, for agenda development for the next meeting.

**North Access from Monroe Station.** Ed Clark opened discussion on ORV access to the north from Monroe Station. ORVs are required to drive north across U.S. 41 to access the ORV trail, creating an issue of safety, liability, and public perception as a result of traffic.

During the creation of the ORV plan, it was decided to close access from the back end of Monument Lake campground and establish that access instead at Monroe North to tie into Monroe South. The reason for this at the time was to prevent mixing camping traffic and ORV traffic at Monument Lake. The ORV plan calls for 15 access points. On page 29 of the plan the designated trail system and the access points would continue to be developed based on resource protection and visitor criteria. A listing of criteria can be found on pages 31 and 32. In particular, designated trails and access points should be situated on the most suitable substrates. Next, access points and designated trails should be situated to maximize use of existing disturbed areas. The plan describes minimizing and avoiding user conflicts, and this is where most problems arise. Preferred locations for ORV trails and access points would avoid hiking trails, canoe trails, and viewing

areas where possible. Access points would be located to minimize mixing ORV use with campgrounds. NPS solved a problem by closing the Monument Campground ORV access, but problems were created by moving the access point to Monroe Station. NPS is asking for input on how to resolve the situation. Burns Lake is a good example of the type of information the NPS is seeking from the ORVAC. The NPS is appreciative of the information provided by the ORVAC when they suggested that the access point be moved from Burns Lake Road to Burns Lake Campground. He hopes that the ORVAC can help NPS with a design plan that will minimize user conflicts. NPS is looking for the ORVAC to help in looking at alternatives, one of which is the status quo and another would be relocating Monroe North to the north side of U.S. 41. Ed asked the committee to please bear in mind that relocation to the north side of the road would require extensive permitting and fill material. Another alternative would be to redesign Monument Campground similar to Burns Lake and provide trail access there. Still another alternative would be to place the trail access on the north side of Monument Lake campground, outside the footprint of the existing campground to prevent redesign of the campground.

### ***Discussion.***

- Wayne Jenkins asked if NPS creates a separate access on the north end of Monument Lake Campground, would there be a check station there, since there is a need for a check station at Loop Road and the Stair Steps Unit. Ed replied that people who come out of Monument Lake will still be able to take their catch over to a check station just like they do when hunting in other units. There is no plan to move the check station.
- Barbara Jean Powell asked for confirmation that NPS will not move forward with this until ORVAC has had an opportunity to review any plans. Ed replied yes.
- John Adornato asked if new trails would be needed if current access is moved to Monument Lake Campground. Ed replied no, a trail system that ties into Monroe North already exists. John: Would you close off access at Monroe Station? Ed: We would close off the Monroe Station access point, and the Monument Lake Campground would become the new access point.
- Karl Greer asked if there have ever been any accidents at the Monroe Station crossing on U.S 41. Ed was not aware of any accidents at the location. However, knowing the history of the road, it is a matter of time when an accident will happen.
- Franklin Adams raised the issue of the Loop Road conservation club and how moving the access point would affect their access.
- Curt Witthoff asked if there were some type of signage or something that would set off safety lights to warn drivers of buggies crossing the road. Franklin Adams responded that he had written FDOT in the past, and they said that his proposal did not meet their criteria for signage.
- Manley Fuller said there should be a flashing light at the Monroe Station crossing. There should be an aggressive outreach from NPS and this committee to get some type of safety crossing.

### ***Public Comment.***

Frank Denninger – If and when another Burns Lake Campground is created, there should be some sensitivity given to the only privately owned campground in the Preserve who has been financially harmed by the ORV plan in general when all of their access has been cut completely off in the Preserve. Burns Lake is one of the most sophisticated campgrounds he has ever seen. There has been a lot of talk about destinations and special places, and he suggested changing the words to perhaps specifications, etc.

Lyle McCandless – The absolute biggest problem sportsmen will face is the 400 miles of designated trails that was the result of the out-of-court settlement of the Biodiversity Project and the NPS. Barbara Jean, Franklin, and a group of others spent days and days in public workshops marking maps with John Donahue, superintendent at the time. It was totally understood and agreed that it would take 1,500 to 2,000 miles of trails to give the ORV community reasonable access as intended in the legislation. The NPS sold us out and made a back door deal with the Biodiversity Project overnight in the middle of this process to get 400 miles of designated trails. This deal occurred illegally and improperly. When this committee was first established, he called Superintendent Ramos and asked that he please listen to him carefully: The ORV community was stuck and forced to go to court because there are only 400 miles of primary trails in the Preserve. The only possibility that the ORV community will have to come out of this dilemma with anywhere near reasonable access is to make sure the committee knows that there is flexibility in the secondary trail system, and there is no limit to the number and mileage of secondary trails. He is hearing from Laurie and John a plot to restrict mileage of secondary trails. They figured out that if they can restrict mileage, they could restrict ORV access to the Preserve. This thing about limiting mileage should not be considered. The committee must apply full use of secondary trails. There are three members who are unqualified to serve on the committee because they openly supported Alternative F of the Addlands General Management Plan.

John Adornato stated that the Federal Advisory Committee Act requires in fact diversity of stakeholder political input in the letter of the law.

Charles Barley – If we go back to Joe Browder and what he described as an expert eyewitness, and if we consider that this Preserve was created for man and his machine to use in a traditional manner, there would be no reason to deny what the ORV community requests. Big Cypress is a preserve, and he is frustrated that the committee seems to lose sight of that fact. The Preserve was made for a reason. Joe Browder reminded us that BICY was created for ORV use. He believes that the ORVAC should keep that in mind and not get sidetracked from that idea.

Christian Mogelvang – He was a doctor for a long time, but before that he conducted biology and botany research all over the state of Florida, earning his biology degree. Most people recognize traditional, most have personal thoughts on traditional, but no direct experience. One of the most basic things of traditional is to go into an area with no designated trails or destination, and personal acceptance of getting trapped, getting attacked, or even killed by animals with a 100% personal responsibility with no liability

anywhere else. We were promised that traditional use would be permitted, and that included random swamp buggy use. This is the most basic fundamental tradition but did not include ATVs because they did not exist. When this traditional use was promised, the vehement resistance subsided and the Preserve was established strictly on that basis. The most fundamental part of any trail plan that fulfills that promise of traditional use is to include provisions in several areas for random access without specific designated trails. Neither primary nor secondary, which will not cause any permanent harm to the Preserve except in the minds of radical, anti-traditional use people and organizations.

Matthew Schwartz – Wanted to clarify what he previously said that he feels was thrown back at him as being anti-hunter. He said that hunting areas are not suitable as secondary ORV trail destinations. He did not say that he is anti-hunting in the Preserve. Selection of a place to photograph orchids is not a suitable destination for establishment of a secondary ORV trail, or any other such reason; specific destinations are clear-cut. A lay person or any reasonable person would read that the definition of a secondary trail, designated campsites and in-holdings, is pretty clear. It is not as vague as people are making it out to be. The purpose of the plan was to create a major reduction in the spatial extent of ORV use for the purpose of resource protection. There was an entire chapter in the plan on legislative mandates that the NPS is obligated to do. The NPS is obligated to place resource protection in the Preserve above recreational use. The NPS has no leeway on that fact. The NPS has the precautionary principle in any situation where recreational use conflicts with resource protection. They have no choice; they must choose resource protection. This document that we all are talking about talks about the high-impact recreational activities. The spread of invasive species and behavior of the Florida panther are examples, and three studies have determined that. Mr. Bergeron said that they have studies that suggest the opposite, and Matthew commented that he had not seen any of them. Research has to guide this process, and that this is why the Omnibus Act was created, to mandate or to basically pave the way to manage resources in a unit of the National Park Service. In the NPS there is a whole set of legislative obligations, executive orders, and policy that these folks must follow. He is sorry that some people feel that the Bear Island lawsuit is frivolous, but we do not see it as frivolous. It is viewed as a violation of the Organic Act to protect resources that were specifically set aside by this plan to protect. He respects what the ORV community is talking about and understands what it is like to lose use of an area and to love an area, but please protect the resources.

### **Proposed 2010 Meeting Calendar.**

Delia presented the proposed 2010 meeting dates: February 2, April 20, June 22, August 17, October 26, and December 7. All meetings will be from 3:30 – 8:00 p.m., and Pedro and Damon will determine where the meetings will be held. During the next meeting there will be further discussion of secondary trails and a report from the Education and Public Use Subcommittee, who will be meeting soon. The committee approved the meeting calendar.

John Adornato asked for any update from the Preserve staff referring to any of the studies.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.